

# Fell Township, Lackawanna County, PA, Schools

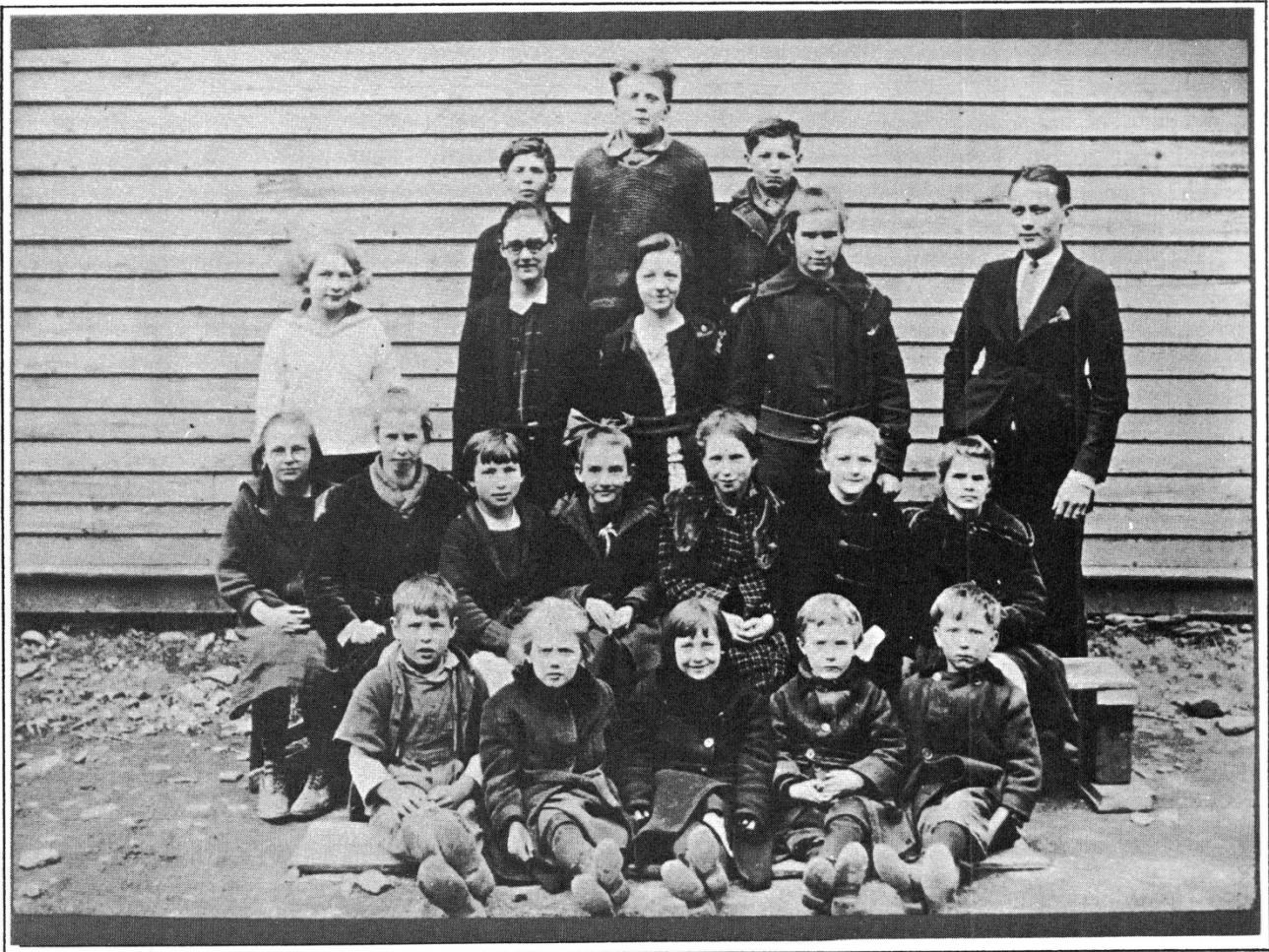
Presented below are photographs of and data about the elementary and secondary schools in Fell Township, Lackawanna County, PA:

## 1. One-Room Country Schoolhouses in Fell Township:

**Schoolhouse near Fallbrook Reservoir** (located on the Route 106 side of the reservoir, on the south side of the road, cellar excavation still visible; referred to by some as "Squirrel Academy"). A history of this school was published in Volume II, Number 4 (May 20, 1981, pp. 22-24) of *Northeastern Pennsylvania*. Here is that history:

<h1>NORTHEASTERN PENNSYLVANIA</h1> <p>A PORTRAIT OF NORTHEASTERN PENNSYLVANIA, ITS POLITICAL AND ADMINISTRATIVE AREAS, NATURAL AND MAN-MADE PHENOMENA, INSTITUTIONS, ARTS, INDUSTRIES, AND CITIZENS--PAST AND PRESENT</p>																																							
Volume II, Number 4	May 20, 1981																																						
<h2>CONTENTS</h2> <p>THE SCHOOLS OF NORTHEASTERN PENNSYLVANIA (Part II)</p> <p>+</p> <p>GENEALOGICAL AND LOCAL HISTORY NOTES</p>	<h2>THE SCHOOLS OF NORTHEASTERN PENNSYLVANIA (Part II)</h2> <table><thead><tr><th></th><th>Page</th></tr></thead><tbody><tr><td>I. IMPORTANT SCHOOL LEGISLATION ENACTED IN PENNSYLVANIA IN THE PERIOD 1895-1930</td><td>1</td></tr><tr><td>II. THE SCHOOLS OF WILKES-BARRE, 1869-1880.....</td><td>2</td></tr><tr><td>III. THE SCHOOLS OF WILKES-BARRE by MRS. LESTER E. KELLEY OF HOLLAND, PA.....</td><td>3</td></tr><tr><td>IV. EAST STROUDSBURG STATE COLLEGE, 1870-1970.....</td><td>4</td></tr><tr><td>V. ST. THOMAS COLLEGE, 1888-1928.....</td><td>5</td></tr><tr><td>VI. THE STUDENTS WHO ATTENDED THE THREE SOLDIERS' ORPHANS SCHOOLS OF NORTHEASTERN PENNSYLVANIA.....</td><td>6</td></tr><tr><td>VII. THE INTERNATIONAL CORRESPONDENCE SCHOOL, 1891-1928.....</td><td>7</td></tr><tr><td>VIII. MARYWOOD COLLEGE, 1915-1928.....</td><td>8</td></tr><tr><td>IX. THE CURTIS VALLEY SCHOOL, CLINTON TOWNSHIP, WAYNE COUNTY by MRS. VERA A. (CURTIS) VARCOE.....</td><td>10</td></tr><tr><td>X. SOME TYPICAL RECITATION REQUIREMENTS OF BY-GONE DAYS.....</td><td>12</td></tr><tr><td>XI. WOOD'S BUSINESS COLLEGE.....</td><td>13</td></tr><tr><td>XII. EDNA LOOMIS, TEACHER.....</td><td>17</td></tr><tr><td>XIII. THE ACADEMIES OF SUSQUEHANNA COUNTY.....</td><td>17</td></tr><tr><td>XIV. THE STONE SCHOOL, MOUNT PLEASANT TOWNSHIP, WAYNE COUNTY.....</td><td>19</td></tr><tr><td>XV. PUBLIC SCHOOLS IN SCRANTON in 1939.....</td><td>20</td></tr><tr><td>XVI. HARFORD SOLDIERS' ORPHANS SCHOOL, SUSQUEHANNA COUNTY.....</td><td>21</td></tr><tr><td>XVII. SQUIRREL ACADEMY, FELL TOWNSHIP, LACKAWANNA COUNTY.....</td><td>22</td></tr><tr><td>XVIII. FLOOR PLANS: SQUIRREL ACADEMY and CARBONDALE AREA JUNIOR-SENIOR HIGH SCHOOL.</td><td>24</td></tr></tbody></table>		Page	I. IMPORTANT SCHOOL LEGISLATION ENACTED IN PENNSYLVANIA IN THE PERIOD 1895-1930	1	II. THE SCHOOLS OF WILKES-BARRE, 1869-1880.....	2	III. THE SCHOOLS OF WILKES-BARRE by MRS. LESTER E. KELLEY OF HOLLAND, PA.....	3	IV. EAST STROUDSBURG STATE COLLEGE, 1870-1970.....	4	V. ST. THOMAS COLLEGE, 1888-1928.....	5	VI. THE STUDENTS WHO ATTENDED THE THREE SOLDIERS' ORPHANS SCHOOLS OF NORTHEASTERN PENNSYLVANIA.....	6	VII. THE INTERNATIONAL CORRESPONDENCE SCHOOL, 1891-1928.....	7	VIII. MARYWOOD COLLEGE, 1915-1928.....	8	IX. THE CURTIS VALLEY SCHOOL, CLINTON TOWNSHIP, WAYNE COUNTY by MRS. VERA A. (CURTIS) VARCOE.....	10	X. SOME TYPICAL RECITATION REQUIREMENTS OF BY-GONE DAYS.....	12	XI. WOOD'S BUSINESS COLLEGE.....	13	XII. EDNA LOOMIS, TEACHER.....	17	XIII. THE ACADEMIES OF SUSQUEHANNA COUNTY.....	17	XIV. THE STONE SCHOOL, MOUNT PLEASANT TOWNSHIP, WAYNE COUNTY.....	19	XV. PUBLIC SCHOOLS IN SCRANTON in 1939.....	20	XVI. HARFORD SOLDIERS' ORPHANS SCHOOL, SUSQUEHANNA COUNTY.....	21	XVII. SQUIRREL ACADEMY, FELL TOWNSHIP, LACKAWANNA COUNTY.....	22	XVIII. FLOOR PLANS: SQUIRREL ACADEMY and CARBONDALE AREA JUNIOR-SENIOR HIGH SCHOOL.	24
	Page																																						
I. IMPORTANT SCHOOL LEGISLATION ENACTED IN PENNSYLVANIA IN THE PERIOD 1895-1930	1																																						
II. THE SCHOOLS OF WILKES-BARRE, 1869-1880.....	2																																						
III. THE SCHOOLS OF WILKES-BARRE by MRS. LESTER E. KELLEY OF HOLLAND, PA.....	3																																						
IV. EAST STROUDSBURG STATE COLLEGE, 1870-1970.....	4																																						
V. ST. THOMAS COLLEGE, 1888-1928.....	5																																						
VI. THE STUDENTS WHO ATTENDED THE THREE SOLDIERS' ORPHANS SCHOOLS OF NORTHEASTERN PENNSYLVANIA.....	6																																						
VII. THE INTERNATIONAL CORRESPONDENCE SCHOOL, 1891-1928.....	7																																						
VIII. MARYWOOD COLLEGE, 1915-1928.....	8																																						
IX. THE CURTIS VALLEY SCHOOL, CLINTON TOWNSHIP, WAYNE COUNTY by MRS. VERA A. (CURTIS) VARCOE.....	10																																						
X. SOME TYPICAL RECITATION REQUIREMENTS OF BY-GONE DAYS.....	12																																						
XI. WOOD'S BUSINESS COLLEGE.....	13																																						
XII. EDNA LOOMIS, TEACHER.....	17																																						
XIII. THE ACADEMIES OF SUSQUEHANNA COUNTY.....	17																																						
XIV. THE STONE SCHOOL, MOUNT PLEASANT TOWNSHIP, WAYNE COUNTY.....	19																																						
XV. PUBLIC SCHOOLS IN SCRANTON in 1939.....	20																																						
XVI. HARFORD SOLDIERS' ORPHANS SCHOOL, SUSQUEHANNA COUNTY.....	21																																						
XVII. SQUIRREL ACADEMY, FELL TOWNSHIP, LACKAWANNA COUNTY.....	22																																						
XVIII. FLOOR PLANS: SQUIRREL ACADEMY and CARBONDALE AREA JUNIOR-SENIOR HIGH SCHOOL.	24																																						

XVII. Squirrel Academy, Fell Township, Lackawanna County:



Ed Lavin and His Students at Squirrel Academy, Fell Township, Lackawanna County, in 1919 or 1920. Copy print by Donald W. Powell from the mounted photograph, 4 5/8" X 6 9/16", by The Artcraft Studio, Carbondale, PA, in the collection of Margaret L. Winter of Jermyn, PA. On July 3, 1979, Helen Loomis (Russell) Powell and Louis Rehkop told Donald W. Powell that this photograph was taken of the group assembled at the back of the school building. HLRP and LR, on July 3, 1979, identified the 20 people in this photograph as follows: back row, left to right: Bill Parks, Louis Rehkop, Bill Shust. Second row from back, left to right: Margaret Williams, Louise Russell, Helen Urda, Emma Parks, Ed Lavin. Second row from front, left to right: Vina Whitmore, Elsie Parks, a Kutch girl, Helen Russell, Thelma Kutch, Martha Williams, Ellen Parks. Front row, left to right: Andrew Cosklo, Lois Jacoby, Kathryn Williams, Niles Robbins, unidentified.

The following history of Squirrel Academy (see map of Fell Township on page 14 of Volume I, Number 3, February 20, 1980, of NORTHEASTERN PENNSYLVANIA) was learned by Donald W. Powell in the period 1977-1980, and communicated to S. Robert Powell in April, 1981:

Squirrel Academy did not exist in 1873. It is not shown on the map of Fell Township, that appears on page 67 of D. G. Beers' Atlas of Luzerne County, Pennsylvania (see complete reference in Volume II, Number 1 of this historical quarterly). One of the schools that is shown on that map, the Russell School, was moved to the site of and, in fact, became Squirrel Academy. It is not known when the building was moved.

This school, which is affectionately referred to by local residents as Squirrel Academy, is called the "Falls School" by Louis Rehkop.

The year when the school was started has not yet been learned, nor has the date when the school was closed. On July 3, 1979, George Wallis told Helen Powell that the building was torn down in the mid-1940s. Helen Powell says that she can recall seeing George and Joe Wallis walking through the fields to get to the school in 1939 or later, so Squirrel Academy was in operation until at least 1939.

On April 8, 1977, Helen Powell--who attended Squirrel Academy from 1919 to 1925--told S. Robert Powell the following information about Squirrel Academy: "It was the coldest place in Lackawanna County. The reason the school was so cold is that the heating systems were, in effect, useless. Initially, there was an asbestos-lined iron furnace with a tin cover in one corner. The heat went right up to the roof and did not heat the lower part of the room. Then they took that out and put in a pipeless furnace. To keep the students from getting burned, they put a pipe on it and the heat all went up to the roof."

There were usually 25-30 students who attended Squirrel Academy per year. One teacher taught all seven grades. On July 3, 1979, Louis Rehkop named the following teachers who taught, over the years, at Squirrel Academy.

Miss Murphy: she taught at Squirrel Academy before Louis Rehkop's time; on September 13, 1979, May and Joe Wallis told Donald W. Powell that they both had Miss Murphy as a teacher at Squirrel Academy.

Miss May Ward: she taught at Squirrel Academy when Louis Rehkop was a student there; on September 13, 1979, May Wallis reported that "May Ward was talking about the schools out here." On May 6, 1980, Louis Rehkop told Donald W. Powell that May Ward is married and lives in the highrise at 60 South Main Street, Carbondale. On April 18, 1981, S. Robert Powell and Donald W. Powell attempted to make the acquaintance of May Ward. In the lobby of 60 South Main Street, SRP and DWP made the acquaintance of Mrs. Sheran, who told them that Mrs. Tracy (nee Jane Ward) might be the lady they are looking for. SRP and DWP checked out this lead from Mrs. Sheran, and concluded, having talked with Mrs. Tracy, that she is not the Miss Ward who taught at Squirrel Academy. SRP and DWP then spoke with Mrs. Sheran again, and she told them that the lady they are looking for is perhaps Leo Murray's sister, Helen, who married a Mr. Moody. Mrs. Moody, unfortunately, Mrs. Sheran added, died about two years ago. Mrs. Moody, Mrs. Sheran reported, used to teach in the country (Fell Township) and in Simpson. Mrs. Sheran next suggested that perhaps Mrs. John Caviston (nee Helen Kelley) might be of help. Together with Mrs. Sheran, SRP and DWP paid a visit to Mrs. Caviston, who reported that she had never taught at Squirrel Academy. Mrs. Caviston reported that she graduated from East Stroudsburg State College in 1925 and then took advanced work at Marwood College; from 1925 to 1930 she was the Supervisor of Art in the schools of Carbondale. Mrs. Caviston spoke very highly of two teachers who used to teach at Carbondale High School: Edna Loomis (see this issue of NORTHEASTERN PENNSYLVANIA, pp. 17-18) and Dwight Rude (see Volume II,

Number 2, p. 9, col. 2 of NORTHEASTERN PENNSYLVANIA). However rewarding their trip to 60 South Main Street on April 18, 1981, SRP and DWP were not, alas, able to make the acquaintance of May Ward.

Miss Clune: she taught at Squirrel Academy when Louis Rehkop was a student there; another Clune, Hortense Clune, was, according to Louis Rehkop, a substitute teacher at Squirrel Academy. Helen Powell reports that Hortense Clune was her first grade teacher at Squirrel Academy in 1919; in 1919, Helen Powell did both first and second grades.

Ed Lavin: he was one of Louis Rehkop's teachers at Squirrel Academy; he ultimately became a teacher; he is the brother of Frank Lavin.

Florence J. Russell: this is the daughter of Angus Cameron Russell (b. 07-26-1864, d. 12-25-1941) and Mary "Mamie" Griffiths (b. 08-12-1870); Florence J. Russell was born 04-30-1897 and became the wife of Dr. D. W. Lowery of Carbondale; she died 02-29-1936. Helen Powell reports that "Florence Russell was one of my last teachers at Squirrel Academy. She was there in 1925, for sure, and maybe for a few years before."

Mr. Mudrick: on July 4, 1979, Helen Powell reported that "Mr. Mudrick was not a teacher at Squirrel Academy in my day [1919-1925]. His father worked on the road--the township truck." On June 7, 1979, Mr. Mudrick spoke with Russell T. Powell as he worked at one of the ponds on the Homestead Golf Course, Carbondale. Mr. Mudrick reported to Russell T. Powell that he was a teacher at the Falls School (Squirrel Academy), and that he was presently living out of the Carbondale area, but visiting in the area and staying with relatives. Donald W. Powell was not able to talk with Mr. Mudrick at that time, and was not able to get in touch with Mr. Mudrick later on.

Three teachers at Squirrel Academy whose names were not mentioned by Louis Rehkop on July 3, 1979.

Gertrude Finnegan: she was one of Helen Powell's teachers at Squirrel Academy.

Margaret (Russell) MacMillan: this is the daughter of George McClelland Russell (b. 02-21-1862, d. 04-30-1926) and Lydia Spencer (b. 04-03-1864, d. 10-27-1953); Margaret Russell (b. 06-19-1886, d. 09-23-1973) married Robert Maxwell MacMillan (b. 06-16-1874, d. 09-25-1929). Margaret (Russell) MacMillan and both of her parents are interred in Maplewood Cemetery, Carbondale. On May 27, 1979, Walter George Russell (nephew of Margaret MacMillan) told Donald W. Powell that "they always said that Margaret MacMillan said that she taught at two log schools, the one at Angus Russell's [the Mount Hope School, see map on page 14 of Volume I, Number 3 of NORTHEASTERN PENNSYLVANIA], and the one at the Reservoir [Squirrel Academy]." Walter George Russell presently owns the bell that Margaret MacMillan used when she taught at Squirrel Academy. Louis Rehkop told Donald W. Powell that he never heard that Margaret MacMillan taught at one time at Squirrel Academy. On September 13, 1979, Joe Wallis reported to Donald W. Powell that Margaret MacMillan was one of his teachers at Squirrel Academy; Joe Wallis also told Donald W. Powell on that day that Margaret MacMillan was one of the teachers of Lulu at Squirrel Academy. Joe Wallis also reported that Margaret MacMillan walked out to the school from her residence on Belmont Street in Carbondale. Helen Powell recalls having heard Margaret MacMillan say that she walked out from Carbondale to teach in the country. It is Helen Powell's guess that Margaret MacMillan taught at the Russell School, which became Squirrel Academy after it was moved down by the Reservoir. Margaret MacMillan was graduated from Bloomsburg Normal School in 1906.

Mary Thomas: on September 13, 1979, May Wallis told Donald W. Powell that one of her teachers at Squirrel Academy was Mary Thomas.

Some of the families whose children attended Squirrel Academy are: Berdine, Brucher, Cosklo, Jacoby, Kutch, Malia, Parks, Rehkop, Robbins, Rodzinski, Russell, Samson, Shust, Trotter, Urda, Whitmore, Wilbur, Williams.

Before 1926, the kids who lived in the country in Fell Township who went on to high school went either to Carbondale High School or Fell Township High School. In 1925, Helen Powell reports, she went "down town" (Carbondale) to Carbondale High School, from which she was graduated in 1930. When Helen Powell went "down town" in 1925, she went to the Roosevelt School on Salem Avenue. A photograph of the class in the Roosevelt School that Helen Powell became a member of when she went "down town" was published in the rotogravure section of *The Scrantonian* in mid-April 1978. The caption on that photograph reads as follows: "The fifth grade class of 1923 poses in front of Carbondale Public School No. 1, which stood on the site of the playground facilities directly across the street from the present Roosevelt School. Students in the photo are: Chuck Healey, Walter Lewis, Donald Cornell, William M. McDonough, Francis Mulholland, Harold Pierson, Harry Timmons, James Calligan, John Andrews, Ivan Cobb, Nina Andrews, Verna Christian, Carl Cramer, Hazel Peters, Grant Evans, Art Cramer, Hollis Leonard, Jack Quinn, Fred Colligan, Maxine Sheppard, Irene Griffiths, Marion Buchert, Ruth Brunner, Lois Scurry, Helen Price, Ida Goldman, Lillian Corey, Frances Bill, Clara Bonacci, Mary Malone, Thelma Monroe, Muriel Humphrey, Marian Wheeler, Lucy McDonough, Isadore Shearer, Marian Jones, Geraldine Frisbie, Florence Quinn, Joe Beucher, George Nichols, Charlotte Patten, Victor Harrison, Mary Nichols, Katherine Knox, Florence Levine, Marion Ward, Walter Lenox, Duane Burnard, Ernest Wood, Winfred Miller, Frank Burnett, Burr Jenkins, Ken Brannan, Millard Stackhouse, Lee Clark, and Dorr Niles. Photo courtesy of Lee Clark."

In addition to the photograph given above of Ed Lavin and his students at Squirrel Academy in 1919 or 1920, the following photographs of Squirrel Academy and/or students who attended Squirrel Academy are known to exist:

1. The Foundation of Squirrel Academy, May 5, 1979. Color photograph, 4 7/8" X 3 7/8", taken by Donald W. Powell on May 5, 1979; foundation is overgrown with small trees and shrubs. On May 21, 1977, Donald W. Powell identified five varieties of wildflowers growing on the site of Squirrel Academy: *Trientalis borealis* - the star-flower, *Fragaria vesca* - the wood strawberry, *Maianthemum canadense* - the wild lily-of-the-valley, *Tiarella cordifolia* - the foamflower, *Viola cucullata* - the marsh blue violet. On May 21, 1977, Helen Powell told S. Robert Powell that "there used to be lots of Trillium and Dutchman's breeches--we used to call them 'boys and girls'--and Spring Beauties in the woods around the school."
2. Miss May Ward and 21 of Her Students at Squirrel Academy in 1917 or 1918. Snap shot, approximately 3" X 4", in the collection of Louis Rehkop, Carbondale, PA; enlarged copy print made by Donald W. Powell from the original photograph. Standing at the far left in this photograph, and holding a pole to which is attached a 48-star flag, is May (Cosklo) Wallis. Standing at the far right and holding the end of the flag is May Ward. Grouped in front of the outstretched flag are 21 students, among whom are a Shust boy, Marion Williams, Sam or Fred Cosklo, Marjorie Samson, Helen Urda, Margaret Williams, Johnny Robbins, Kenneth Russell, a Williams girl, Louise Russell, Viola Rehkop, Amber Rehkop, Margaret Williams, Louis Rehkop, Isabelle Samson.
3. Four Men Standing in Williams' Field Across from Squirrel Academy, May 26, 1921. Snap shot, 4 3/16" X 2 7/16", in the Russell Homestead Photograph Archive, Carbondale, PA. Written at the base of the front of this photograph is the following: "May 26, 1921." The third person from the left is identified as "Mr. Lavin teacher." The identity of the other three persons in the photograph has not yet been learned.
4. Ed Lavin and His Students at Squirrel Academy in 1922. Snap shot, 4 3/16" X 2 7/16", in the Russell Homestead Photograph Archive, Carbondale, PA; enlarged copy print by Donald W. Powell from the original photograph. Back row, left to right: Kenneth Russell, Margaret Williams, Thelma Kutch, Julia Kutch, Ed Lavin, Libby Rodzinski, Emma Parks, Helen Urda, Margaret Louise Russell, Louis Rehkop. Middle row, left to right: Andy Shust, Sam Cosklo, unidentified, Helen Rodzinski, Lucy Whitmore, Stasia Rodzinski, Elsie Parks, Helen Loomis Russell, Tony Malia, Lorraine Trotter, Bill Shust. Seated on the ground, left to right: Robert Parks, Lorraine Trotter, Bill Brucher, unidentified, Kathryn Williams, Vina Whitmore, Lois Jacoby, Martha Williams, Andy Cosklo. This photograph was taken in Williams' field, across from Squirrel Academy. The barn in the background is Williams' barn. This barn was purchased, ultimately, by William Anderson Russell, and dismantled and moved to the Russell Homestead, Fell Township, where it was re-assembled, and where it was referred to as "the grey barn." The barn is no longer standing, but the foundation is still intact, and can be seen to the right of the fairway of the tenth hole at the Homestead Golf Course. On September 13, 1979, Louis Rehkop pointed out to Donald W. Powell that the Crystal Lake Road is visible in this photograph, in the upper left-hand corner. On July 3, 1979, Helen Powell told Donald W. Powell that the school picnics at Squirrel Academy were usually held on the Williams place, across the road from the school.

This photograph is given below on p. 8

5. Fifth Grade, Squirrel Academy, May 26, 1922. Snap shot, 4 3/16" X 2 7/16", in the Russell Homestead Photograph Archive, Carbondale; enlarged copy print made by Donald W. Powell from the original photograph. The six students standing in front of Ed Lavin in this photograph, taken on May 26, 1922, were identified on July 4, 1979 by Helen Powell as follows: left to right, Martha Williams, Bill Shust, Elsie Parks, Lorraine Trotter, Anastasia Rozdilski, Helen Russell. At the base of the original photograph, Helen Powell has written the following: "5th grade May 26, 1922."
6. Squirrel Academy, 1925. Snap shot, 3 15/16" X 2 1/4", in the collection of Louis Rehkop, Carbondale; enlarged copy print made by Donald W. Powell from the original photograph. Written at the base of the front of the original photograph, taken by the side of Squirrel Academy, is the following: "School 1925." There are 24 students in this photograph. Louis Rehkop and May (Cosklo) Wallis identified the following: a Robbins boy, a Cosklo boy, Kathryn Williams, Niles Robbins, Peter Rozdilski, Ellen Parks, Helen Rozdilski, Lucy Whitmore, Stasia Rozdilski, a Kutch, Elsie Parks.
7. Milk Wagon on the Road in Front of Squirrel Academy, 18 Persons Seated on the Wagon. Snap shot, 4 3/16" X 2 7/16", in the Russell Homestead Photograph Archive, Carbondale; enlarged copy print made by Donald W. Powell from the original photograph. Louis Rehkop, Joe Wallis, Lorraine Lynch, and Helen Powell have, at various times, looked at this photograph, and have identified the following persons in this photograph: Margaret Williams, a Whitmore girl, May Wallis, Lorraine Lynch, Marjorie Samson, Helen Powell, Louise Winter, a Parks girl, Isabelle Samson, a Cosklo, a Rozdilski, Julia Kutch. On September 13, 1979, Joe Wallis remarked that the team of horses that is pulling the milk wagon in this photograph belonged to Harry Kenyon, who is in this photograph in the back row, third from the left. On August 18, 1978, Lorraine Lynch remarked that the animals pulling the milk wagon in this photograph are mules.

On March 29, 1981, Donald W. Powell wrote the following text:

"No more buildings, an occasional teacher, a smattering of students, and an occasional book or report card.

The present status of the one-room wooden country schools of northeastern Pennsylvania.

Were we to characterize the status of the one-room wooden country school of northeastern Pennsylvania today, March 1981, we might say the following. The buildings are for the most part gone completely out of sight--very few schools remain standing, many more exist only in piles of rubble, and even more exist only as sunken foundations of the school building and out houses, and almost gone completely out of mind--an occasional teacher, now in her seventies or eighties or older, still survives, and the pupils from the last classes to attend the one-room schools are now celebrating their 50th or more class reunions, and an occasional text book or teacher's class book or a student report card surfaces among the memorabilia and family treasures of the old settled families. In a few years, surely by the turn of the millenia, all those who had any direct contact with the buildings--teachers, students, and school supervisors--will be gone."

Three additional one-room country schools in Fell Township

Three additional one-room country schools in Fell Township, Lackawanna County, PA

1. MOUNT HOPE SCHOOL

For the exact position of this school, see the map of Fell Township, Lackawanna County, that is reproduced on page 14 of Volume I, Number 3 of this historical quarterly, whereon this school can be seen on the Crystal Lake Road at the intersection of the driveway leading to a building marked "H. Wedeman" (presently occupied by the Lott family) and the Crystal Lake Road. At the present time, a mobile trailer is situated more or less at the site on which once stood the Mount Hope School. On July 3, 1979, Donald W. Powell asked Louis Rehkop about this school, and he replied that he never knew a school was built on this site. On September 13, 1979, May and Joe Wallis told Donald W. Powell that the only thing they knew about the Mount Hope School is that it was situated where the mobile home at the Lott driveway is presently situated.

## 2. CRYSTAL LAKE SCHOOL

For the exact position of this school, see the map of Fell Township, Lackawanna County, that is reproduced on page 14 of Volume I, Number 3 of this historical quarterly, whereon this school can be seen on the Crystal Lake Road not far from the point where it intersects with the road that branches off the Crystal Lake Road above the "Jno Russell Res." On July 3, 1979, Louis Rehkop referred to this school as "the red school house up by John Russell's." Louis Rehkop also pointed out that "Angus Russell substituted at the Little Red Schoolhouse and delivered mail." On September 13, 1979, May and Joe Wallis reported to Donald W. Powell: "Margaret Boland taught at the Little Red School House at the 'Y' [in the road]. Florence Russell taught at the Little Red School House and at Squirrel Academy."

## 3. RUSSELL SCHOOL

For the exact position of this school, see the map of Fell Township, Lackawanna County, that is reproduced on page 14 of Volume I, Number 3 of this historical quarterly, whereon this school can be seen a short distance to the east of the building identified as "Jas Russell" (this school was situated more or less on the site now occupied by the 18th tee at the Homestead Golf Course; the Louis Rehkop residence is on the opposite side of PA Route 106 from where the Russell School once stood).

On pages 14 and 27 of Volume I, Number 3 of this historical quarterly, some information about the Russell School is presented. As we reported in that issue of NORTHEASTERN PENNSYLVANIA, the Russell School was established by James Russell for the education of his children, as well as other children in the neighborhood (the names of the ten children of James Russell and Margaret Gillespie Locke are given on page 27 of Volume I, Number 3 of NORTHEASTERN PENNSYLVANIA).

It is possible that Margaret (Russell) MacMillan taught at the Russell School. On April 19, 1978, Helen Powell told S. Robert Powell the following: "I don't know if Margaret MacMillan taught at the Russell School or down at Squirrel Academy. I know that when the weather was bad, she used to stay at the Russell Homestead, so she may have taught out here at the Russell School."

In the Document Archive of the Russell Homestead, there is a letter that was written on December 14, 1941 to Eleanor Pritchard Jones (b. 03-04-1883, d. 02-06-1970) by Isabel E. Wedeman, the wife of the oldest child of James Russell and Margaret Gillespie Locke. Two paragraphs of that letter contain valuable information about not only some of the students who attended the Russell School but also the moving of the Russell School building to a new site. Those two paragraphs are as follows:

"On October 25, 1882, Johnny<sup>1</sup> and I<sup>2</sup> were married and went to Ohio to visit his cousins there as he had always replied to their invitations years before, 'I'll make that my wedding trip.' Therefore it was arranged between us to go there and Johnny had your mother<sup>3</sup> write them that we would be there.--The family consisted of James A. Bruce<sup>4</sup> and wife<sup>5</sup> Christina,<sup>6</sup> Maggie<sup>7</sup> & Mina,<sup>8</sup>--his sisters.

I had met Maggie<sup>9</sup> and Jenny Bruce<sup>10</sup> several times when they had visited at the Russell House. Also Mrs. Byall<sup>11</sup> who visited there some years later--Had also met Will Liddell<sup>12</sup> there when I was quite young going to school with Maggie<sup>13</sup> & Teana Russell<sup>14</sup> John<sup>15</sup> & Jim<sup>16</sup> at the Russell School house down across the bridge from the Russell house; later moved down near the forks of the road.<sup>17</sup>"

1 John Russell (b. 10-24-1851, d. 04-11-1885, m. on 10-25-1882 to Isabel E. Wedeman) is the oldest child of James Russell and Margaret Gillespie Locke.

2 Isabel E. Wedeman (b. 05-10-1858, m. on 10-25-1882 to John Russell).

3 Margaret "Maggie" Gillespie Russell (b. 04-13-1855, d. 03-02-1930) m. on 01-16-1877 to Samuel Sheldon Jones (b. 06-21-1850, d. 04-16-1928) by Rev. E. D. Bryan at the Russell Homestead, Fell Township, Lackawanna County; Maggie Russell is one of the children of James Russell and Margaret Gillespie Locke.

- 4 James A. Bruce (b. 02-12-1839, d. 10-10-1907, m. Margaret A. Dobbs (b. 02-22-1843, d. 08-07-1928)). James A. Bruce is one of the six children of James Russell's sister, Martha Russell (b. 07- -1810 near Glasgow, Scotland, d. 1864 in Wooster, OH) and Alexander Bruce (the son of James Bruce and Margaret Hendrie; Alexander Bruce was born near Stirlingshire, Scotland, 08-04-1800, and died 07- -1869 in Wooster, OH, from small pox, m. Martha Russell in Scotland on 01-01-1836, and emigrated to America in 1842).
- 5 Margaret A. Dobbs (b. 02-22-1843, d. 08-07-1928).
- 6 Christina Bruce, one of the six children of Martha Russell and Alexander Bruce (see note number 4). Christina Bruce was born in Scotland in September, 1837, and died in Wooster, OH, on February 28, 1898. She married John Wallace (b. 02-24-1827, d. 01-23-1917).
- 7 Margaret "Maggie" Henry Bruce, one of the six children of Martha Russell and Alexander Bruce (see note number 4). Maggie Bruce was born 03-28-1842 and died 01-31-1917.
- 8 Wilhelmina Jean Bruce, one of the six children of Martha Russell and Alexander Bruce (see note number 4). Mina Bruce was born 03-21-1853 and died 07-30-1939, she married Charles Frank Davison (b. 01-31-1859, d. 02-24-1916).
- 9 This is Margaret "Maggie" Henry Bruce (see note number 4).
- 10 Janet "Jennie" Bruce, one of the six children of Martha Russell and Alexander Bruce (see note number 4). Jennie Bruce was born on 07-20-1849 and died on 03-31-1892, married Robert McKee Knox (b. 06-14-1840, d. 02-20-1923; both are interred in Hoopeston, IL). The only child of Martha Russell and Alexander Bruce who is not mentioned by name in this letter from Isabel E. Wedeman to Eleanor Pritchard Jones is Martha Russell Bruce, who was born on September 22, 1845 and died in July 1880.
- 11 Mrs. Byall is Christina Anderson Bruce (oldest of the six children of James Russell's sister, Jean Russell, who was born on 04-14-1812 in Glasgow, Scotland, and who died on 07-02-1879 in Wooster, OH; on 02-18-1838 she was married to William Bruce in Falkirk, Scotland, by Rev. William Anderson, D. D. William Bruce, the son of James Bruce and Margaret Hendrie, was born on 03-25-1793 in Airth, Scotland, and died on 09-01-1868 in Wooster, OH, from a fall from a horse at age 75; William Bruce and Jean Russell are both interred in Wooster, OH. Christina Anderson Bruce married D. Byall (b. 08-17-1837, d. 06-16-1928); the couple lived in Garnett, KS.
- 12 William G. Liddell (son of James Russell's twin sister, Christina, and David Liddell). Christina Russell was born in June 1815 in Scotland and died on September 30, 1865 in Wooster, OH; David Liddell was born on 02-27-1797 and died on 10-27-1869. David Liddell and Christina Russell were married on June 12, 1844 in Carbondale; they are both interred in Wooster, OH. William G. Liddell was born on 05-16-1845 and died on 03-28-1913; he married Mary Amelia Downing.
- 13 This is Maggie Gillespie Russell (see note number 3).
- 14 Christina Anderson Russell (b. 08-12-1864, d. 02-18-1881) is one of the children of James Russell and Margaret Gillespie Locke.
- 15 John Russell (see note number 1) is the oldest of the ten children of James Russell and Margaret Gillespie Locke.
- 16 James A. Russell is one of the children of James Russell and Margaret Gillespie Locke. He was born 04-29-1853 and died on 07-13-1929; he married Viola Kenyon Rivenburg, who was born on 10-17-1857 and who died in 1955. The couple are both buried in Clifford, PA. James A. Russell was the twentieth mayor of the city of Carbondale; he served as mayor in the years 1884-1885.
- 17 On April 19, 1978, Helen Powell told S. Robert Powell the following when he asked her about the meaning of the last part of this sentence: "The forks of the road, that's what we always called the Crystal Lake Road... the intersection of the Crystal Lake Road and the road to Carbondale [present-day PA Route 106]. The school that she's [Isabel E. Wedeman] talking about down near the forks of the road is the one I went to, Squirrel Academy."

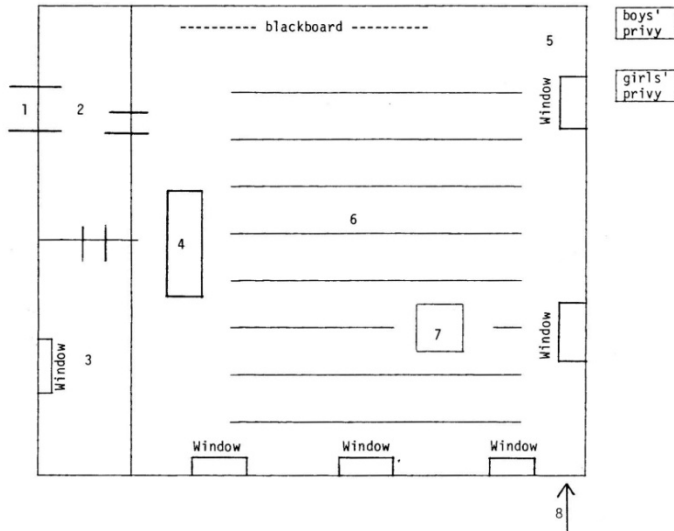
The founder of the Russell School, James Russell, is the son of John Russell and Christina Anderson. John Russell was born in Scotland and so was his wife, Christina Anderson. The couple came to America about October 1, 1840, their ultimate destination being Wooster, OH. On their way there, they stopped at McAlla City (present-day Elkdale) to visit Martha Anderson (Christina Anderson's sister) and her husband, Archibald McAlla. Six weeks after the arrival of John Russell and Christina Anderson in Elkdale, John Russell died, and his wife, therefore, decided to settle in Elkdale with their children, and not to proceed to Wooster, OH.



Floor Plan of Squirrel Academy, Fell Township, Lackawanna County

On the basis of Helen Loomis (Russell) Powell's recollections of Squirrel Academy, articulated on May 21, 1977, SRP set down the floor plan that is given at right. The foundation of this building, which SRP and DWP located on May 21, 1977, measures approximately 24' X 36' (foundation not under entrance hall and cloak room).

- 1 entrance, double doors, porch and 4-6 steps
- 2 entrance hall
- 3 cloak room
- 4 teacher's desk
- 5 jacket (coal) stove, asbestos-lined tin outer covering
- 6 7-8 rows of seats
- 7 pipeless furnace (coal); no. 5 and no. 7 were not in the room at the same time
- 8 cellar door



(End of material from *Northeastern Pennsylvania* on one-room country schools in Fell Township.)



This photograph was published in *The Pioneer City A Photographic Record of Carbondale, PA*, Volume II, 2005, p. 58, with the caption given here.

Many small country schools were located in townships surrounding Carbondale in the early years of the twentieth century. Shown here are the members of the fifth grade class of the school that was located west of the Fallbrook Reservoir on present-day Route 106. Standing, far right, is Helen Loomis Russell.

See p. 5, above, for the caption on this photo that was written by Donald W. Powell

## 2. Jefferson School, Forty-Third Street, Fell Township:

A photograph of the Jefferson School building is given herein on p. 12.

1907:

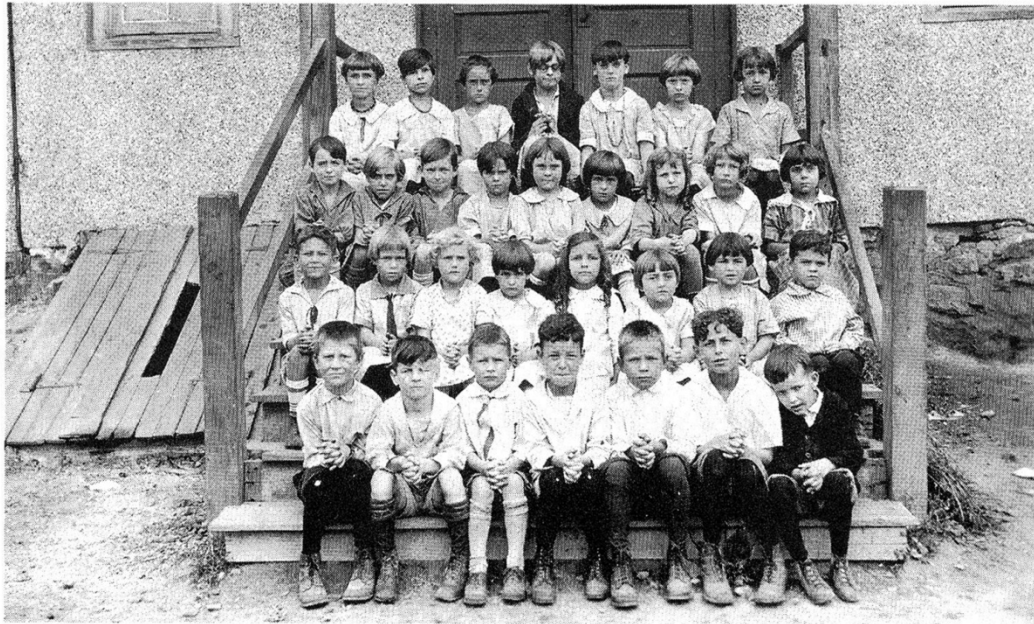


The second grade class at the 43<sup>rd</sup> Street School, the Jefferson School, in 1907. Top Row: Alberta Howard, Mary Nevins Walsh, Alberta Brennan Enright, Romaine Rosler, Anna Loftus Walsh, Mary Scheck, Isabelle Hicks, Ivy Edwards. Second Row: Joseph Nevins, Edward Lavin, Walter Ward, Patrick Ward, Howard Corrigan, Leo Howard, Edward Evans, Maurice Cornich. Third Row: Joseph Brennan, Martin Keller, James Flannery, Henry Rosler, Robert Nevins, Elmer Rixker, Joseph Morrison, Earl McMahon, John Langen. Front row: Claude Ross, Stanley Fisher, Edward Owens.

15

The photograph shown above was published in *The Pioneer City A Photographic Record of Carbondale, PA*, Volume II, 2005, p. 15, with the caption given here.

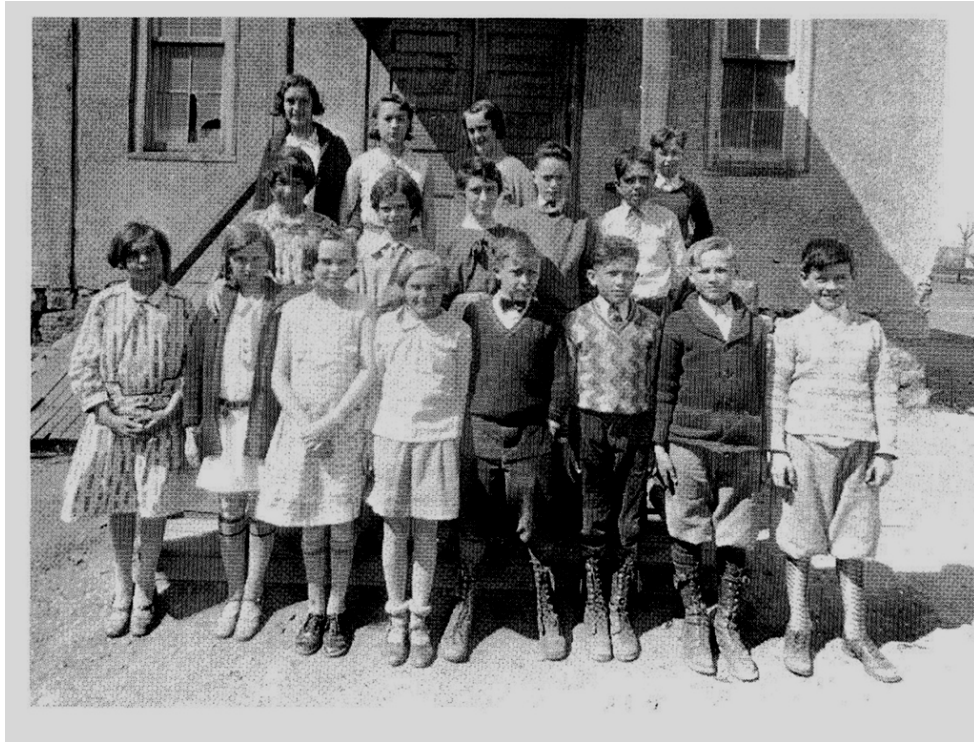
1926:



Jefferson School, 43<sup>rd</sup> Street, Fell Township, 20 October 1926. Top Row – Left to Right: Margaret Gillen, Ina Kohen, Margaret Loftus, Isabelle Strum, Agnes Gillen, Viola Harris, Carolyn Ross. Second Row from Top – Left to Right: Evelyn Langan (twin), Eleanor Williams, Marjorie Langan (twin), Dorothy Sullivan, Dorothy Loftus, Mary Brothers, Unknown, Arlene Ross, Anna Harkenreader. Third Row from Top – Left to Right: Arthur Ross, Unknown, Blanche Sweeney, Lucille Fallon, Celia Kohan, Unknown, Grace Castro, John Moffitt. Bottom Row – Left to Right: Unknown, Robert Mangan, James Thompson, Robert Roche, Unknown, Unknown, Herbert Fallon.

The photograph shown above was published in *The Pioneer City A Photographic Record of Carbondale, PA*, Volume I, 2004, p. 29, with the caption given here.

1931:



Jefferson School, Fell Township, 13 April 1931. Front Row – Left to Right: A. Hakerita, V. Haine, Dorothy Loftus, B. Sweeney, N. Holembach, A. Ross, S. Petrailock, B. Mangan. Second Row – Left to Right: D. Hawkins, D. Sullivan, Rosemary Loftus, V. Coleman, G. Flanery. Third Row – Left to Right: N. Brothers, C. Ross, A. Gillen, H. Holembach.

The photograph shown above was published in *The Pioneer City A Photographic Record of Carbondale, PA*, Volume I, 2004, p. 96, with the caption given here.



Jefferson School (aka Coalbrook School) 20 September 1935. Class List for Grades 1 to 7/8 and then some. Upstairs with Miss Mangan (later Krantz): Jack Middleton, Joe Castro, Charles Nelson, William Snyder, William Frazer, Paul Hokerita (Herkenreader), James Gillen, Betty Lash, Rosemary Loftus, Rosamond Flanery (Flannery), Nan Toolan, Mary Buckingham, Dot Moffitt, Rebecca Buckingham, Mildred Cornish, Eileen Thompson, Mary Lou Loftus, Elonoar Corrigan, Anna Lash, Grace Castro, William Loftus, John Toolan Downstairs with Miss Anna Clune (later Coleman): Mary Colman (Coleman) Joan Middleton, Jean Moffitt, Michael Corrigan, Helen Lash, Lucy Brothers, Helen Hokerita (Herkenreader), Joan Colman (Coleman), Ruth Ross, William Corrigan, Billy Thompson, Sarge Loftus (Harold, Jr.), John Colman (Coleman), Jackie Gillen, Bobbie Buckingham, Leo Russo, Junior Cornish, Bertha Arnold, Millie Toolan, Margaret Peggy Strom, John Jackie Loftus, Rose Lash, Jimmy Loftus, Frank Hokerita (Herkenreader), Tommy S., Lena Nelson, Greg Corrigan, Stanley Hokerita, Greg Frazer, Kathryn Castro. Also appearing in this photo are: Bobby Langan, Dutchie Cornish, Francie Skinner Horn, Hankie Loftus, Thomas Tucker Loftus, Anna Harkenreader and neighborhood children who were too young to attend school but not too young to have their picture taken.

The photograph shown above was published in *The Pioneer City A Photographic Record of Carbondale, PA*, Volume I, 2004, p. 29, with the caption given here.

c. 1950:



Rose H. Christina and her students, front steps of Jefferson School, Forty-Third Street, Fell Township, in the early 1950s.

The photograph shown above was published in *The Pioneer City A Photographic Record of Carbondale, PA*, Volume I, 2004, p. 97, with the caption given here.

Additional notes on this photograph:

S. Robert Powell attended this school for first grade (1949-1950), second grade (1950-1951), and third grade (1951-1952). His teacher was Miss Rose Christina. Robert is in the middle row, third from the right, wearing a striped shirt. Behind him, also wearing a striped shirt, is Donald W. Powell. Their brother Jim is in the middle row, second from the left.

In the middle row, far right is Betty Cosklo; in the front row, second from the right is Helen Costello.

**3. Washington School, 750 Main Street, Simpson, PA:**



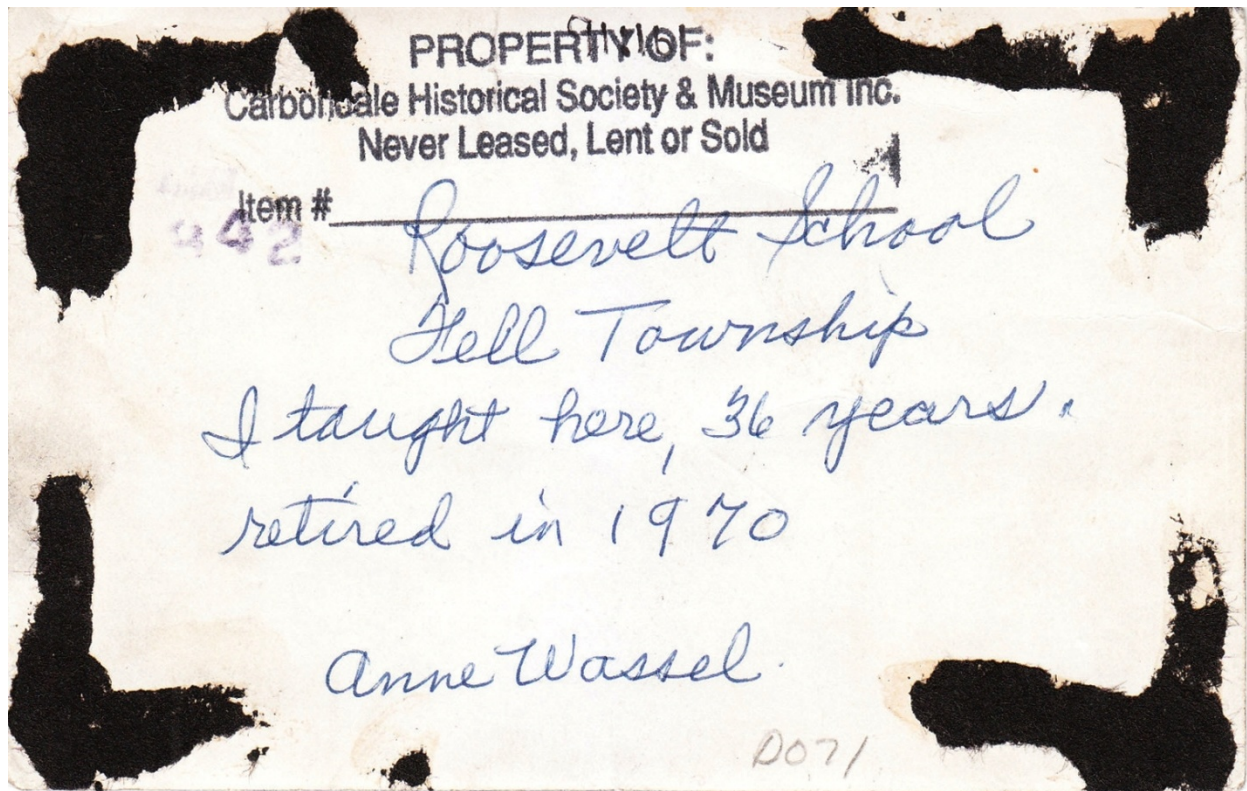
*Washington School, Simpson, PA.* This building, which is no longer standing, was located at 750 Main Street (at the top of the triangular-shaped park on Main Street in Simpson that is now known as Monkey Run Park). This photograph is in the collection of the Carbondale Historical Society. S. Robert Powell attended fourth grade in this school (room on the right front of the school, first floor), 1952-1953. His teacher was Mr. S. A. Waurin; Mr. John V. Wilk was the Principal. This school remained open after the closing of the Roosevelt School, and may have served as the Fell Township Elementary School until the merger of the Fell Township and Carbondale schools.

4. **Roosevelt School**, 7 Ontario Street, Simpson:



*Roosevelt School, Simpson, PA.* This building was located at 7 Ontario Street. S. Robert Powell attended fifth and sixth grades in this school, 1953-1954, 1954-1955.

Here is the reverse of this photograph of the Roosevelt School:



In the 1959 Carbondale City Directory, "7 Ontario Street" (the street address of the Roosevelt School) is described as "vacant". Was the school open in 1958? Not sure. There is not a city directory for 1958 in the collection of the Carbondale Historical Society. In 1957 the school was still open and in use, and in the 1957 Carbondale City Directory, John A. Propeack is listed as Principal of the school. When did the school open? Miss Wassel taught in the Roosevelt School for 36 years. Assuming that she was teaching there in 1957, that would indicate that the school was open in 1921. S. Robert Powell attended the Roosevelt School for Fifth Grade (1953-1954) and Sixth Grade (1954-1955). Among the teachers there at that time were Mr. John A. Propeack, principal, Miss Kathryn Lavin, and Miss Anne Wassel.



*Roosevelt School:* Acquired by Telephone Engineering and used as a warehouse. We see the Roosevelt School here in a photograph that was taken by Mike Bischak, Simpson, PA, on January 26, 2019.


In December 2019, an initiative was begun to tear down the Roosevelt School. S. Robert Powell was interviewed by Frank Wilkes Lesnefsky, a *Scranton Times* reporter, about the school. Here is Lesnefsky's article, as published in the *Scranton Times*, December 2, 2019:

*Scranton Times, December 2, 2019*  
*Roosevelt School*

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## Fell Twp. looking to demolish century-old schoolhouse by the spring

*Lesnefsky interviewed SRP for this article*



The crumbling stone foundation of the former Roosevelt School on Ontario Street in Fell Twp. on Friday.  
FRANK WILKES LESNEFSKY / STAFF PHOTO

BY FRANK WILKES LESNEFSKY, STAFF WRITER / PUBLISHED: DECEMBER 2, 2019

FELL TWP. — Sixty years after schoolchildren last roamed the halls of the Roosevelt School, the century-old building is slated to be torn down in the coming months.

The township and Lackawanna County Land Bank first announced plans to demolish the long-abandoned building on Ontario Street last year, hoping at the time to have it torn down earlier this year. Now, the township is

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High School Sports Blog

SRP →

set to open bids for the demolition later this month.

Township Supervisor Andy Gorel said the project was held up by "bureaucracy," including conducting an environmental study and the process of meeting government specifications to receive funding.

Gorel wants to have the demolition completed by the spring.

"It's a major eyesore," he said. "It's the biggest building in the neighborhood, and it's in the worst shape."

He believes the building, which is flanked by well-kept residential homes, has been abandoned for about 30 years.

The schoolhouse was constructed at least a century ago, and it housed first through sixth grades until the late 1950s, said S. Robert Powell, Ph.D., president of the Carbondale Historical Society. After the school closed, a telephone company used the building for storage.

Powell attended the school in the 1950s.

"It was a very serviceable and wonderful old building," he said. "Well built and did its job for decades."

Now, the building is surrounded by overgrown brush and houses a population of feral cats. A rusted metal door hangs from its hinges, and a corner of the school's stone foundation is crumbling away.

The township planned to open bids tonight to demolish the school, but siding with asbestos in it forced the township to push back the bids, said township engineer Gary Wilding of KBA Engineering.

Township supervisors will now open bids on Dec. 17, he said.

The siding can either be removed piece by piece before the rest of the building is demolished, or the entire building can be demolished at once, Wilding said.

Although the debris would be watered down, he noted concerns of disturbing the asbestos as it's loaded into dumpsters or driven over by heavy equipment if it's not removed before demolition.

Both options will cost about the same, Wilding said.

### Days before start of trial, Factoryville man pleads guilty in federal child porn case

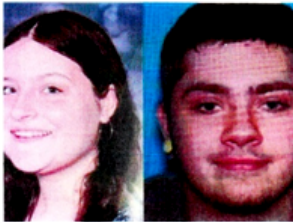
A week before the start of his child pornography trial, a Factoryville man pleaded guilty Monday in federal court in Scranton. (read more)

### 'Fishing for cats' suspect gets prison time

WILKES-BARRE — The Plymouth man accused of "fishing for cats" with a



baited hook was sentenced Monday to serve up to 23 months in the Luzerne County Correctional Facility. (read more)



## Man accused of kidnapping teen in Luzerne County dead after confrontation in woods

A 15-year-old girl is safe and the man who police say abducted her and stole a police vehicle in Nanticoke on Sunday is dead. (read more)



## 65 years ago: Scranton Transit Co. to close last streetcar line in Scranton

Scranton Transit Co. filed paperwork with the Public Utility Commission to close the last streetcar line in Scranton, the Green Ridge Suburban. (read more)

## Attorney Robert W. Munley Jr. dies at 89; his legal career

Marcus Arthur has lived next door to the old building for the past four years. The township resident didn't think the building was much of a problem aside from the stray cats, but he's concerned about the asbestos. He lives with his wife, Emily, and their 1 ½-year-old son, Marcus Jr.

"My biggest concern is the asbestos becoming airborne. Obviously that's everybody's concern," he said. "That's why it's still standing."

Arthur said he would rather the township remove the siding first for the safety of the neighborhood.

When the school is demolished, he'd consider buying it himself to build a new garage.

"If that becomes available, why not take more property on?" he said.

The county land bank owns the property, and once the school is torn down, the land bank will transfer the deed to Fell Twp., said land bank business relations manager Ralph Pappas. Then, after the land is sold, the land bank will receive half of the taxes for five years, he said.

Fell Twp. joined the land bank last year, and the organization gave the township \$20,000 toward the demolition, Pappas said.

The land bank helps return abandoned and tax-delinquent properties from the county's repository list to productive use by clearing them of all back taxes and municipal liens before marketing them to potential buyers.

"Hopefully, someone will scoop it up quick," Pappas said.

Contact the writer:

flesnefsky@timeshamrock.com; 570-348-9100 x5181;

@flesnefskyTT on Twitter

MONDAY UPDATE brings

Times-Tribune readers up to date on past or pending stories of interest. To offer a suggestion for a Monday Update, please email metrodesk@timeshamrock.com with

"Monday Update" in the

subject line.

**5. Lincoln School / High School, Main Street, Simpson:**



*Lincoln School, Fell Township High School, Main Street, Simpson, PA. Photo in the Mike Bischak Collection, Simpson, PA. In the 1950s and 1960s, this school was referred to by all as “the old High School”. At the time of the influenza epidemic in America, 1918, the building became the “Simpson Emergency Hospital”.*

The former *Lincoln School / High School* was acquired by Telephone Engineering Company and used by that company until the late 1990s. Here are two photographs of Telephone Engineering Company by Mike Bischak, Simpson, PA:



*Telephone Engineering Company (former Lincoln School / High School).* Photo by Mike Bischak, Simpson, PA, December 10, 1983.



*Telephone Engineering Company (former Lincoln School / High School). Photo by Mike Bischak, Simpson, PA, September 23, 2012.*

**6. Fell Township Junior/Senior High School, 17 John Street, Simpson:**



*Fell Township Junior/Senior High School* (later to become Fell Elementary School), Simpson, PA. Photograph by Mike Bischak, Simpson, PA, April 14, 2013. S. Robert Powell graduated from this school on June 8, 1961. The supervising principal at the time was Stephen J. Bambas. Among SRP's teachers were Demetrius Tarris, Lillian Washelski, Walter Washeleski, Alfred Washeleski, Kathryn Lavin, Mr. Franks, and John J. Werwinski.

**7. Fell Charter School, Main Street, Simpson:**



*Opening Day at the Fell Charter School, September 16, 2002. Photo by Mike Bischak, Simpson, PA, September 16, 2002. At the time, the school consisted of temporary modular buildings.*



*Fell Charter School.* Photo by Mike Bischak, Simpson, PA, September 22, 2013.